

Application No.: 10/693271
Amendment dated: June 17, 2005
Reply to Office action of March 17, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 3 and 5 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 4 and 6 have been made dependent on claims 3 and 5, respectively. Each of claims 4 and 6 includes all of its original limitations, including the limitations of its parent claim and any intervening claims. Claims 7, 11, 15 and 19, which have not been changed, are dependent on claim 3. Claims 8, 12, 16, and 20, which have not been changed, are dependent on claim 4. These claims were all found to be directed to allowable subject matter, and should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has also been amended to address the rejections on Joyce, Eschmann, and Joyce in view of Lundstrom. Claim 1 now recites that the "hydrophilic, nonwoven fabric is composed of fibers finer than those of which the batt material is composed, whereby water held in the part of the batt material on the wet web side of the hydrophilic nonwoven fabric readily moves into the hydrophilic nonwoven fabric." The recitation added to claim 1 finds support in paragraph 0050 of the specification.

Joyce's fibrous barrier layer 16 is formed by fusing fibers of the batt layer, and consequently to the extent that the barrier layer is a "nonwoven" fabric, it is composed of fibers that are not finer than those of the batt material.

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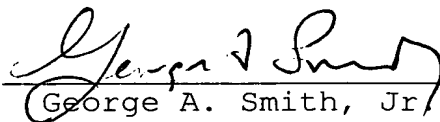
Lundstrom describes a slotted blocking layer composed of spaced, parallel filaments 8 defining elongated slots. The size of the filaments 8 of Lundstrom's non-woven blocking layer 24 is not specified, but from the drawings, it is apparent that the filaments are substantially larger than the filaments of the batt material.

Lundstrom's non-woven layer is provided to prevent a filling material from penetrating into a surface layer (col. 4, lines 13-21). The size of the filaments of the Lundstrom's nonwoven layer 24 is likewise not specified, but from the drawings, it is apparent that the filaments are substantially larger than the 6 den or 3.74 den batt fibers.

The remaining references do not appear to add anything to the applied references by way of suggestion of the feature now defined by claim 1.

Favorable reconsideration, and allowance of claim 1 and its dependent claims, along with claims 3 and 4 and their dependent claims, are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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